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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: WB/G SITREP: TWO WB BANK TEENS ARRESTED WITH
BOMBS; FATAH MEMBERS DISRUPT HAMAS DEMO IN AL-BUREIJ -- MAY
25, 2005 (1300 HOURS LOCAL)

This is a joint ConGen Jerusalem/Embassy Tel Aviv cable.

1. (SBU) Summary: The IDF on May 24 arrested a Palestinian teenager carrying two pipe bombs in a bag as he attempted to pass through the Huwwara checkpoint, south of Nablus. Israeli sappers later blew up the bag containing the bombs. This arrest follows a similar occurrence May 22, when a Palestinian teenager was arrested at the Huwwara checkpoint after the IDF discovered he was wearing an explosive belt. In Gaza, a total of seven Palestinians were injured May 23 in al-Bureij camp, when three Palestinians, reportedly Fatah supporters, drove their vehicle through a large Hamas demonstration then in progress, while at the same time firing their weapons into the air. Five people were injured when they were struck by the car, and two were injured by gunfire. Hamas supporters reportedly stopped the vehicle and detained the three occupants for several hours in a mosque nearby. The three were later released after intervention by Fatah leaders. On May 24, PA security forces, working in cooperation with IDF soldiers, blocked a smuggling tunnel in the Brazil quarter of the Rafah refugee camp. End Summary.

West Bank

2. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Death: Nil.

-- Injury: Nil.

-- Shooting: Palestinian gunmen on May 24 fired shots at an IDF position in the vicinity of Qaddim settlement, southeast of Jenin. There were no injuries reported from this incident.

-- Shooting: Palestinian gunmen on May 24 fired shots at an IDF vehicle traveling south of Hebron. There were no injuries reported from this incident, but the IDF vehicle sustained damage during the attack.

-- Firebombing: Palestinians on May 24 threw two firebombs at Israeli vehicles traveling near Kokhav Hashahar settlement, northeast of Ramallah. There were no injuries reported from this incident.

3. (SBU) ARRESTS/SECURITY:

-- Arrest: The IDF on May 24 arrested a Palestinian teenager carrying two pipe bombs in a bag as he attempted to pass through the Huwwara checkpoint, south of Nablus. Israeli sappers later blew up the bag containing the bombs.

-- Catch-up Item: Arrests: On May 22, a Palestinian teenager was arrested at the Huwwara checkpoint after the IDF discovered the teenager wearing an explosive belt.

-- Arrests: The IDF on May 24 arrested three Palestinians in the Nablus and Qalqilya districts. Two of those arrested were identified as Fatah activists, while the third was reported to be a member of PIJ.

-- Arrest: The IDF on May 24 arrested a member of a Palestinian human rights NGO at the Qalandia checkpoint, south of Ramallah. Palestinians suspect that the arrest is linked to his reported ties to the PFLP.

-- Settler violence: Israeli settlers on May 24 entered Marda village, south of Nablus, and damaged a vehicle belonging to a Palestinian resident of the village. In the village of Kafr Qalil, southeast of Nablus, settlers stoned Palestinian homes. There were no injuries reported from these two incidents.

4. (SBU) DEMOLITIONS:

-- IDF bulldozers on May 24 destroyed a house under

construction and two shacks in Idhna village, west of Hebron.
The structures reportedly lacked the required building permits.

15. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- According to Palestinian sources, jailed West Bank Fatah leader Marwan Barghuthi is planning to establish a prisoners coalition that would run in the upcoming Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections, currently scheduled for July 17. Other Palestinians incarcerated by Israel, including jailed PLC member Husam Khader, are reportedly being considered to head the list.

Gaza

16. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: Nil.

-- Catch-up Item: Injuries: UNRWA and Palestinian sources reported that a total of seven Palestinians were injured May 23 in al-Bureij camp, when three Palestinians, reportedly Fatah supporters, drove their vehicle through a large Hamas demonstration then in progress, while at the same time firing their weapons into the air. Five people were injured when they were struck by the car and two were injured by gunfire, according to UNRWA. Hamas supporters reportedly stopped the vehicle and detained the three occupants for several hours in a mosque nearby. The three were later released after intervention by Fatah leaders.

-- Mortars/Rockets: The IDF reported that Palestinian militants fired an anti-tank missile in the vicinity of an IDF outpost west of Rafah May 24.

-- Mortars/Rockets: UNRWA reported that an IDF coastal vessel pursued a Palestinian fishing boat off al-Soudania beach in northern Gaza May 24. The IDF vessel fired at the Palestinian boat, which was not hit and managed to escape IDF pursuit, according to UNRWA.

-- Shootings: The IDF reported an exchange of fire northeast of Sufa Crossing May 24

17. (SBU) TUNNELS:

-- UNRWA reported that PA security forces, working in cooperation with IDF soldiers, blocked a smuggling tunnel in the Brazil quarter of the Rafah refugee camp May 24.

18. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS:

-- Route Four (Salahadeen Road), the main north-south traffic artery, was open May 25, with a major detour at Netzarim Junction.

-- Erez Crossing was open May 24, and 3,983 laborers and 287 merchants entered Israel.

-- The Erez Industrial Zone was open May 24, and 630 laborers entered.

-- Sufa Crossing was closed for Palestinian laborers May 25, but was open for the import of aggregates used in construction.

-- Karni Terminal was open May 25.

-- Rafah Terminal was open May 25 for arrivals and departures.

-- Tel al-Sultan checkpoint was closed May 25. Toufah checkpoint was open for residents of al-Mowassi, except males aged 16-30.

19. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- Members of the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades demonstrated and burned tires in Khan Yunis the evening of May 24, blocking passage of PA vehicles through the area for several hours. The men reportedly demanded jobs, according to UNRWA.

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KURTZER